

## Message Text

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ACTION EUR-25

INFO OCT-01 ADP-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-09 H-02 INR-10 L-03

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FM AMEMBASSY BONN

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5065

INFO AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY PARIS

USMISSION BERLIN

USMISSION NATO BRUSSELS

AMCONSUL BREMEN

AMCONSUL DUSSELDORF

AMCONSUL FRANKFURT

AMCONSUL HAMBURG

AMCONSUL MUNICH

AMCONSUL STUTTGART

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 BONN 07010

E. O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, GW

SUBJECT: THE CDU AT A TURNING POINT

1. SUMMARY: AS BARZEL' S POLITICAL DEMISE APPEARS IMMI-  
NENT, THERE ARISES THE MORE GENERAL QUESTION WHETHER  
KOHL AND SCHROEDER, BARZEL' S MOST PROBABLE SUCCESSORS  
CAN: 1) DEVISE A PLATFORM BROAD ENOUGH TO BE GENERALLY  
ACCEPTABLE TO BOTH THE CDU AND THE CSU; AND 2) MAKE IT  
PRECISE AND ATTRACTIVE ENOUGH TO WIN VOTES AND MAKE A  
COALITION WITH THE FDP AT LEAST POSSIBLE. IT WILL BE A  
DIFFICULT TASK. END SUMMARY.

2. A GREAT DEAL HAS BEEN MADE OF BARZEL' S PERSONAL HANDI-  
CAPS, HIS LACK OF CHARISMA AND HIS INDECISIVENESS. BUT  
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THESE CHARACTERISTICS REFLECT THE NATURE OF THE PARTY BEHIND HIM AS MUCH AS HIS OWN LIFE STYLE. IT IS HARD TO BE BOTH CHARISMATIC AND VAGUE, AND YET SINCE 1969 THE CDU/ CSU HAS NOT BEEN ABLE TO DEVISE A PROGRAM THAT PERMITS PRECISION. IN SUM, THE DECLINE AND FALL OF BARZEL IS THE FATE OF PRAGMATISM DEVOID OF FUNDAMENTAL BELIEF.

3. ILLUSTRATIVE OF BOTH THE DILEMMAS THAT FACED BARZEL AGAIN AND AGAIN SINCE THE CDU BECAME THE OPPOSITION AND HIS STYLE OF RESOLVING THEM WAS HIS FIRST MAJOR COMPROMISE IN THE SPRING OF 1970 WHEN THE CDU/ CSU FRAKTION IN THE BUNDESTAG, AFTER MUCH DEBATE, MADE ITS FATEFUL DECISION TO FOCUS ITS ATTENTION ON OSTPOLITIK AND DAMN IT ROOT AND BRANCH. THE POSITIONS TAKEN IN THAT DEBATE CONSTITUTE ONES STILL GENERALLY VISIBLE IN THE FRAKTION AND STILL IRRECONCILABLE. THERE WAS A GROUP THAT POINTED OUT THAT THE FIRST MOSCOW SOUNDING HAD ALREADY TAKEN PLACE UNDER KIESINGER AND THAT IF OSTPOLITIK FAILED THE OPPOSITION WOULD REAP THE BENEFIT IN ANY CASE AND, IF IT DIDN' T FAIL AND THE CDU HAD ADAMANTLY OPPOSED IT, THEN THE PARTY WOULD FIND THAT IT HAD PAINTED ITSELF INTO A CORNER FROM WHICH IT WOULD BE VERY DIFFICULT TO EXTRICATE ITSELF. THIS GROUP ALSO ARGUED THAT THE RESULTS OF THE ELECTION FIVE MONTHS EARLIER HAD PROVED THE NECESSITY OF MOVING SLIGHTLY LEFTWARD IF THE CDU WISHED TO RETURN TO POWER.

4. THE CONSERVATIVES, HOWEVER, LED BY STRAUSS, ARGUED THAT OSTPOLITIK WAS A DANGER OF SUCH MAGNITUDE TO THE FRG AND THE WHOLE WESTERN WORLD THAT THE CDU/ CSU COULD NOT MERELY OBSERVE IN SKEPTICAL SILENCE AND THAT, FURTHERMORE, THE USSR WAS NOT PREPARED TO BE FORTHCOMING ENOUGH FOR THE SPD EVER TO BE ABLE TO CLAIM CREDIBLY THAT OSTPOLITIK HAD BEEN A SUCCESS. THE PRECISION AND HEAT OF THE CONSERVATIVE POSITION WAS CLEARLY ASCENDANT WHEN COMPARED TO THE VAGUENESS OF THE LIBERAL WING; AND BARZEL, WHO HAD TAKEN NO POSITION HIMSELF, SUDDENLY DECLARED THAT SECRET INFORMATION REGARDING BRANDT' S ULTIMATE AND DANGEROUS INTENTIONS VIS- A- VIS THE USSR HAD JUST COME TO HIM, AND BECAUSE OF THAT HE WAS COMPELLED TO ACCEPT THE VIEWS OF STRAUSS. THUS BEGAN THE

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EVENTS THAT LED ULTIMATELY TO THE NOVEMBER 1972 DISASTER FOR THE CDU.

5. HOWEVER, WITH NO PRECISE BODY OF BELIEF ON HIS LEFT AND HAVING THUS NEUTRALIZED HIS RIGHT, THE BARZEL- LED CDU ENJOYED A SERIES OF MODEST INTERIM SUCCESSES IN LAND ELECTIONS AND IN DEFECTIONS FROM THE FDP AND EVEN THE SP

ITSELF. INDEED HAD HIS OWN RANKS BEEN SOLID, BARZEL WOULD TODAY BE CHANCELLOR BY VIRTUE OF THE NO- CONFIDENCE VOTE OF LAST APRIL. FURTHERMORE, THE CDU DUESSELDORF CONVENTION OF JANUARY 1971, AT WHICH THE STARS WERE THE CONSERVATIVE DREGGER AND GUEST SPEAKER STRAUSS, CONFIRMED, TO KOHL'S HUMILIATION, THAT THE VOICE OF CONSERVATISM WAS STILL LOUDLY HEARD IN THE LAND AND IN FACT CONTROLLED NOT ONLY THE CSU BUT THE CDU AS WELL.

6. THE ELECTION OF NOVEMBER 1972, THE POINT AT WHICH

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 02 OF 02 BONN 07010

BARZEL'S POLITICAL CAREER REALLY ENDED, DESPITE THE FEW REMAINING MONTHS OF APPARENT LIFE, DID LITTLE TO DAMAGE THE RIGHT. DREGGER'S CDU IN HESSE DID BETTER, COMPARED WITH 1969, THAN THE CDU ANYWHERE ELSE AND STRAUSS' CSU

HELD ITS OWN. THUS THE LOSS WAS OBVIOUSLY BARZEL'S AND THAT PART OF THE CDU THAT HAD ALLEGEDLY DESERTED CONSERVATIVE PRINCIPLES TO BECOME A PALE IMAGE OF THE SPD. THE MAJOR QUESTION FOR THE CDU REMAINS, THEREFORE, NOT ONE OF WHO BUT RATHER OF WHITHER.

7. SCHROEDER, AS FRAKTION CHAIRMAN, WILL BE STRONG ENOUGH IN HIS PERSONALITY, AS BARZEL OFTEN WAS NOT, TO HOLD HIS OWN WITH STRAUSS IN THE IMPORTANT INTRA- FRAKTIO  
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BATTLES OVER PARTY POSITIONS IN THE BUNDESTAG. THE MORE IMPORTANT QUESTION IS WHERE THE CDU WILL AIM ITSELF AT ITS CONVENTION IN HAMBURG THIS FALL WHERE IT WILL GIVE ITS CHAIRMAN, PRESUMABLY KOHL, A MANDATE TO CHARGE IN SOME GENERAL DIRECTION OR OTHER. STRAUSS WILL, OF COURSE, NOT HAVE A VOTE BUT HIS PRESENCE WILL BE FELT AND HIS ALLIES, DREGER FIRST AMONG THEM, WILL BE HEARD. THEREFORE, THE REAL PROBLEMS OF CDU POLICY, WHICH HAVE SO OFTEN BEEN UNDERPLAYED IN A SIMPLE AND SIMPLE-MINDED CONDEMNATION OF BARZEL, REMAIN.

8. BY INDICATING THAT HE WILL NOMINATE BIEDENKOPF, THE PARTY'S EXPERT ON CO- DETERMINATION IN INDUSTRY, TO BE THE PARTY'S NEW SECRETARY GENERAL, KOHL SEEMS TO HAVE SERVED NOTICE THAT HE INTENDS MORE OR LESS TO MOVE THE PARTY LEFTWARD TOWARD THE CENTER HE THOUGHT HE COULD LEAD IT TOWARD AT DUESSELDORF. BUT KOHL, HAVING BEEN BADLY BURNT AT DUESSELDORF, IS A CAUTIOUS MAN AND WHAT HE WILL SEEK TO HAVE THE PARTY ADOPT AS A PLATFORM IS NOT AT ALL CLEAR. HIS SILENCE ON NATIONAL MATTERS THESE LAST TWO YEARS HAS BEEN MONUMENTAL.

9. BUT EVEN THE SEMBLANCE OF UNITY AND SINGLENES OF PURPOSE WITHIN THE CDU/ CSU-- AND AT LEAST THAT MUCH CAN BE EXPECTED IN THE SHORT RUN AS THE OPPOSITION HUDDLES TOGETHER FOLLOWING THE CHILL OF THE LAST ELECTION AND THE TEMPORARY EMBARRASSMENT OF BARZEL'S BURIAL-- WILL BE BENEFICIAL TO THE OPPOSITION, IN PART BECAUSE THE PROBLEMS WITHIN THE SPD AND THE ECONOMY ARE BECOMING MORE WORRISOME. THUS, CONCEIVABLY, THE CDU COULD ELECT TO CONTINUE TO IGNORE THE HARD DECISIONS OF BASIC POLICY AND STILL RETURN TO POWER THROUGH WEARINESS AND MISTAKES BY THE SPD VERY MUCH AS THE SPD ITSELF CAME TO POWER BY BURYING ITS CONCERN WITH BASIC POLICY FIFTEEN YEARS AGO IN THE PRAGMATIC GODESBERG PROGRAM ULTIMATELY TO COME TO POWER IN GREAT PART BECAUSE THE CDU HAD BECOME MUSCLE- BOUND AND STERILE. IF, HOWEVER, THE CDU'S RIGHT WING HAS THE STRENGTH AND THE WILL AT HANNOVER TO CALL THE TUNE, THEN THE ELECTION OF LAST NOVEMBER MAY BE ONLY THE FORERUNNER OF OTHERS TO COME AND THE PROMISE OF A LONG TIME IN THE

WILDERNESS.  
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10. A RIGIDLY RIGHT OF CENTER OPPOSITION WOULD ALSO BE  
A DISSERVICE TO THE COUNTRY BECAUSE IT WOULD BE INEFFECT  
IVE AND THIS IN TURN WOULD ABET THE FLACCIDITY AND BICK-  
ERING WITHIN THE COALITION, PARTICULARLY WITHIN THE SPD.  
BUT THE PUSH AND PULL OF DOMESTIC GERMAN POLITICS IN  
RECENT YEARS, WITH THE DEATH OF THE NPD, THE LACK OF SUC  
CESS OF THE DKP, THE OBVIOUS PUBLIC AVERSION TO BOTH THE  
SPD' S FAR LEFT AND THE CDU' S FAR RIGHT, TOGETHER ARE  
REASSURING EVIDENCE THAT THE OVERWHELMING MAJORITY OF  
GERMANS ARE CLUSTERED AROUND THE CENTER OF THE POLITICAL  
SPECTRUM AND APPARENTLY INTEND TO STAY THERE. THE CDU  
KNOWS THAT, BUT IT HAS NOT YET DEMONSTRATED IT KNOWS  
WHERE THE CENTER IN 1973 REALLY IS.  
HILLENBRAND

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